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Letter dated 26 October 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to attach herewith the text of the addresses delivered by Mr. Fidel Castro Ruz, President of the Republic of Cuba, on 22 September and 6 October 2001 on the subject of terrorism (see annexes I and II).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under the item entitled "Measures to eliminate international terrorism", and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bruno **Rodríguez Parilla**
Ambassador
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Annex I to the letter dated 26 October 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Address by Mr. Fidel Castro Ruz, President of the Republic of Cuba, at the Tribuna Abierta de la Revolución, San Antonio de los Baños, Havana, on 22 September 2001

No one can deny that terrorism is today a dangerous and ethically indefensible phenomenon that must be eradicated, regardless of its deep economic and political origins and those responsible for them.

The unanimous anger aroused by the human and psychological damage done to the American people by the unexpected and shocking deaths of thousands of innocent people, whose images have shaken the world, is understandable. But who are the ones who have profited from it? The extreme right, the most backward and right-wing forces, those in favour of crushing the growing world rebellion and sweeping away everything progressive that remains on the planet. Whoever organized and was responsible for this act committed an enormous error, a tremendous injustice and a great crime.

Nevertheless, the tragedy should not be used to start a war recklessly, in the name of justice and under the peculiar and bizarre name of "Infinite Justice", that could actually unleash an endless carnage of innocent victims.

In the past few days we have seen the hasty establishment of the foundations, the concept, the true purposes, the spirit and the conditions of such a war. No one could claim that it was not something well thought-out in advance, something that was just waiting for a chance to materialize. After the so-called end of the cold war, those who continued a military build-up and the development of the most sophisticated means of killing and exterminating human beings were aware that their huge military investments would give them the privilege of imposing their absolute and complete dominance over the other peoples of the world. The ideologists of the imperialist system knew very well what they were doing and why they were doing it.

After the shock and sincere sorrow felt by all peoples throughout the world for the atrocious and insane terrorist attack against the people of the United States, the most extremist ideologues and most belligerent hawks, already established in their privileged positions of power, have taken command of the most powerful country in the world, whose military and technological capabilities seem infinite. Its capacity to destroy and kill is enormous, while its inclination towards equanimity, serenity, thoughtfulness and restraint is minimal.

The combination of elements, including complicity and the common enjoyment of privileges with the other powerful and rich countries, and the prevailing opportunism, confusion and panic, make it almost impossible to avoid a bloody and unpredictable outcome.

The first victims of whatever military actions are undertaken will be the billions of people living in the poor and underdeveloped world, with their unbelievably serious economic and social problems, their unpayable debts and the ruinous prices of their basic commodities; their growing natural and ecological disasters; their hunger and extreme poverty; the massive undernourishment of their

children, teenagers and adults; their terrible AIDS epidemic; and their malaria, tuberculosis and infectious diseases, which threaten whole nations with extermination.

The grave world economic crisis was already a real and irrefutable fact affecting absolutely all of the major economic power centres. This crisis will inevitably worsen under the new circumstances, and when it becomes unbearable for the overwhelming majority of people, it will bring chaos, rebellion and the inability to govern.

But the price will also be unpayable for the rich countries. For years to come, it will be impossible to speak out strongly enough about the environment and ecology, or about new ideas, research and testing, or about nature conservation projects because these will be crowded out by military actions, war and crimes as infinite as "Infinite Justice", the name given to the war operations to be unleashed.

Can there be any hope left, after listening to the speech delivered by the United States President before the Congress barely 36 hours ago?

I shall avoid the use of adjectives, qualifiers or offensive words towards the author of that speech. They would be absolutely useless and badly timed, when the tensions and seriousness of the moment favour thoughtfulness and equanimity. I shall limit myself to quoting some short sentences that say it all:

"We will [use] every necessary weapon of war."

"Americans should not expect one battle, but a lengthy campaign, unlike any other we have ever seen."

"Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists."

"I've called the armed forces to alert, and there is a reason. The hour is coming when America will act, and you will make us proud."

"This is the world's fight. This is civilization's fight."

"I ask for your patience [...] in what will be a long struggle."

"[...] the great achievement of our time, and the great hope of every time, now depends on us."

"The course of this conflict is not known, yet its outcome is certain [...] and we know that God is not neutral."

I ask our fellow countrymen to meditate deeply and calmly on the ideas contained in several of the above-mentioned sentences.

• "Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists."

No nation of the world has been left out of the dilemma, not even the big and powerful States; none has escaped the threat of war or attack.

• "We will use any weapon."

No procedure has been excluded, regardless of its ethics, nor has any threat, however fatal — nuclear, chemical, biological or any other — been excluded.

- "It will not be a short combat but a lengthy war, lasting many years, unparalleled in history."
- "It is the world's fight; it is civilization's fight."
- "[...] the great achievement of our time, and the great hope of every time, now depends on us."

Lastly, an unheard-of confession in a political speech on the eve of war, and no less so in a time of apocalyptic danger: "The course of this conflict is not known, yet its outcome is certain [...] and we know that God is not neutral."

The assertion is astounding. When I think about the real or imagined parties involved in the bizarre holy war that is about to begin, I find it difficult to distinguish which fanaticism is stronger.

On Thursday, before the United States Congress, the idea was put forward of a world military dictatorship under the exclusive rule of force, irrespective of any international law or institution. The United Nations, which has been simply ignored in the present crisis, would fail to have any authority or prerogative whatsoever. There would be only one boss, only one judge and only one law.

We have all been ordered to become allies either with the United States Government or with terrorism.

Cuba, the country that has suffered the most and the longest from terrorist actions, the one whose people are not afraid of anything because there is no threat or power in the world that can intimidate them, courageously proclaims that it is against terrorism and against war. Although the possibility is now remote, Cuba reaffirms the need to avert a war of unpredictable consequences, whose very authors have admitted they have not the slightest idea of how events will unfold. Likewise, Cuba reiterates its willingness to cooperate with every country in the total eradication of terrorism.

An objective and calm friend should advise the United States Government not to cast young American soldiers into an uncertain war in remote, isolated and inaccessible places, where they will fight against ghosts whose whereabouts and even existence is uncertain, not knowing whether the people they kill are responsible or not for the killing of their innocent countrymen in the United States.

Cuba will never declare itself an enemy of the American people, who are today being subjected to an unprecedented campaign to sow hatred and a vengeful spirit, so much so that even the music inspired by the hope of peace has been banned. On the contrary, Cuba will make that music its own, and even our children will sing their songs of peace as long as the announced bloody war lasts.

Whatever happens, the territory of Cuba will never be used for terrorist actions against the American people, and we will do everything within our power to prevent such actions against them. Today we are expressing our solidarity, while urging peace and calmness. One day they will admit we were right.

We shall defend our independence, our principles and our social achievements with honour, to the last drop of blood, if we are attacked.

It will not be easy to fabricate pretexts for such an attack. They are already talking about a war using all necessary weapons, but it will be useful to recall that

not even that would be a new experience. Almost four decades ago, hundreds of strategic and tactical nuclear weapons were aimed at Cuba, and nobody remembers any Cuban losing sleep over that.

We are the same sons and daughters of that heroic people, with a patriotic and revolutionary conscience that is stronger than ever. It is a time for serenity and courage.

The world will become aware of this and will raise its voice in the face of the terrible tragedy it is about to suffer.

As for Cubans, this is the time to proclaim ourselves prouder and more resolute than ever:

Socialism or death!

Homeland or death!

We shall overcome!

Annex II to the letter dated 26 October 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Address by Mr. Fidel Castro Ruz, President of the Republic of Cuba, at the Tribuna Abierta de la Revolución, Plaza de la Revolución, on 6 October 2001, commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the terrorist attack off the coast of Barbados

History is capricious and is given to strange twists. Twenty-five years ago, in this very same square, we bid farewell to a few coffins containing tiny fragments of the human remains and personal belongings of some of the 57 Cubans, 11 Guyanese — most of them students on scholarships in Cuba — and 5 Korean cultural officials who died as a result of a brutal and incredible act of terrorism. What was especially moving was the death of the entire youth fencing team, male and female, who were returning with all the gold medals they had won in a Central American championship in that sport.

A million of our fellow countrymen, with tears in their eyes, in many cases running down their cheeks, bid a more symbolic than actual farewell to our brothers and sisters whose bodies were lying at the bottom of the ocean.

No one, with the exception of a group of friendly distinguished persons and institutions, shared our sorrow; there was no uproar in the world, no serious political crises, no meetings at the United Nations, no imminent threat of war.

Perhaps few people in the world understood the terrible significance of that act. How important could it be that a Cuban civilian aircraft was destroyed in mid-flight with 73 people on board? It was as if it was a normal occurrence. Had not thousands of Cubans died already in La Coubre, Escambray and the Bay of Pigs and in hundreds of terrorist attacks, acts of piracy and other similar actions? Who was going to attach importance to the complaints of a tiny country? It seemed that a simple denial from our powerful neighbour and its news media, which flooded the world, was sufficient and the matter would be forgotten.

Who could have predicted that almost exactly 25 years later a war with unpredictable consequences would be on the point of breaking out as a result of an equally repugnant terrorist attack which claimed the lives of thousands of innocent people in the United States? Back then, in what now appears to be a tragic omen, innocent people from several countries died; on this occasion human beings from 86 nations perished.

Then, as now, there were hardly any remains of the victims. In Barbados, not a single body could be recovered; in New York, only a few were recovered and not all of those could be identified. In both cases, family members were left with a vast emptiness and immense distress; the horrific crime brought unbearable sorrow and deep indignation to the peoples of each country. These were not accidents or the result of mechanical failures or human error; they were deliberate acts, conceived and carried out in cold blood.

There were, however, some differences between the monstrous crime committed off the coast of Barbados and the inconceivable and sinister terrorist attack against the people of the United States. In the United States, the act was the work of fanatics who were prepared to die alongside their victims; in Barbados, it

was the work of mercenaries who did not run the slightest risk. The main goal in the United States was not to kill the passengers; the perpetrators hijacked the aircraft in order to attack the Twin Towers and the Pentagon, without any concern for the death of the innocent people travelling in them. In Barbados, the basic objective of the mercenaries was to kill the passengers.

In both cases, the anguish suffered by the passengers during the final minutes of their lives, especially those in the fourth aircraft hijacked in the United States — who already knew what had happened in New York and Washington — must have been terrible, like that of the crew and passengers of the Cuban aircraft during the desperate attempt to return to land when it was clearly impossible to do so. In both cases, there were demonstrations of courage and determination: in Barbados, we learned of them from the recorded voices of the Cuban crew, and, in the United States, from reports from that country on the attitude adopted by the passengers.

Moving filmed images have remained of the horrific events in New York. Not a single photograph has remained, nor could remain, of the explosion of the aircraft off the coast of Barbados and its plunge into the sea. The only testimony left is to be found in the dramatic communications between the crew of the doomed aircraft and the control tower at the airport in Barbados.

This was the first time in the history of Latin America that such an act had been instigated from abroad.

In this hemisphere, the systematic use in the political arena of such cruel and terrible practices and procedures was initiated against our country. It was preceded in 1959 by another equally senseless and irresponsible practice: the hijacking and diversion of aircraft in mid-flight, a phenomenon which was practically unknown in the world at that time.

The first attack of this kind was the hijacking of a DC-3 passenger aircraft bound from Havana to the Isla de la Juventud by several former members of the repressive forces of Batista's tyranny, who diverted the aircraft and forced the pilot to fly to Miami on 16 April 1959. This was less than four months after the triumph of the Revolution. The perpetrators of the attack were never punished.

Between 1959 and 2001, a total of 51 Cuban aircraft were hijacked and almost without exception diverted to the United States. Many of these hijacked aircraft were never returned to Cuba. A number of pilots, guards and other people were killed or wounded and several aircraft were destroyed or seriously damaged in failed hijacking attempts.

As a consequence, the plague of hijackings of aircraft in mid-flight soon spread to the United States itself, where, for the most varied reasons, a number of people, most of them unbalanced individuals, adventurers or common criminals, from both the United States and Latin America, began to hijack aircraft, armed with firearms, knives, Molotov cocktails and sometimes just bottles of water made to look as though they contained gasoline, with which they threatened to set the aircraft on fire.

Thanks to the painstaking care of the Cuban authorities, not a single accident occurred upon landing and the passengers always received proper treatment and were immediately returned to their places of origin.

Most of the hijackings and diversions of Cuban aircraft occurred between 1959 and 1973. Faced with the risk of a catastrophe in the United States or Cuba, since there were hijackers who, once they had taken control of an aircraft, threatened to fly it into the Oak Ridge atomic plant if certain demands were not met, the Government of Cuba took the initiative of approaching the Government of the United States — at that time under the Presidency of Richard Nixon and with William Rogers as Secretary of State — with a proposal for an agreement to deal with cases of hijacking of aircraft and piracy at sea. The proposal was accepted and the agreement was quickly drawn up; it was signed by representatives of the two Governments on 15 February 1973 and immediately published in the Cuban press and given wide coverage.

This reasonable and well-drafted agreement established heavy penalties for hijackers of aircraft and ships. It served as a deterrent. From that date on, there was a considerable reduction in the number of Cuban aircraft hijacked; during a period of over 10 years every attempted hijacking in Cuba failed.

The brutal terrorist attack that led to the explosion of the Cuban aircraft in mid-flight dealt a devastating blow to this excellent and effective agreement. As a result of this inconceivable act of aggression and taking into account the fact that it occurred in the middle of a new wave of terrorist acts against Cuba unleashed towards the end of 1975, the Cuban Government denounced the agreement, in accordance with the clauses stipulated therein. However, it retained in force, unchanged, the measures set out in the agreement against the hijacking of United States aircraft, including the application of severe penalties which, under the agreement, had been increased to sentences of up to 20 years' imprisonment. Even before the agreement was signed, the Cuban courts had been applying the penalties established in our Penal Code against aircraft hijackers, although the penalties were less severe.

Despite the strict application of the penalties, a few United States aircraft were hijacked and diverted to Cuba. After due advance warning, the Cuban Government returned two hijackers to the United States on 18 September 1980, handing them over to the United States authorities.

During the period from September 1968 to December 1984, 71 incidents were recorded of aircraft being hijacked and diverted to Cuba. According to the records, 69 participants in those hijackings were tried and sentenced to terms of imprisonment of between three and five years; subsequently, after the signing of the 1973 agreement, sentences ranged from 10 to 20 years.

As a result of the measures taken by Cuba, there has not been a single incident of the hijacking or diversion of a United States aircraft to Cuba in the past 17 years.

What, on the other hand, has been the attitude of the United States? From 1959 until today, the United States authorities have not punished a single one of the hundreds of individuals who have hijacked and diverted to that country dozens of Cuban aircraft, not even those who committed murder in carrying out the hijacking.

It is impossible to conceive of a greater lack of basic reciprocity or a greater incitement to the hijacking of aircraft and ships. This rigid policy has been maintained for over 42 years, without a single exception, and is still being maintained.

The constructive agreement between the Governments of Cuba and the United States on the hijacking of aircraft and ships, the results of which were immediately evident, was apparently accepted by the principal leaders of the terrorist groups. Some had cooperated or participated actively in the organization of irregular warfare, through armed groups which, at certain times, extended throughout the six former provinces of the country. The majority of them had been recruited by the United States Government in the days of the Bay of Pigs invasion and the Cuban missile crisis, and in later years, to take part in all kinds of violent actions, especially in assassination plots and terrorist attacks that did not leave any sphere of economic and social life untouched or rule out any method, any procedure or any weapon.

They attended all kinds of institutions, schools and training programmes, at times to be trained and at other times to be entertained.

Dramatic events such as the Kennedy assassination gave rise to major investigations, including those carried out by a United States Senate committee. The embarrassing situations and scandals which resulted compelled a change of tactic but no genuine change of policy towards Cuba, which explains why, after relative periods of calm, there were new waves of terrorism.

That is what happened in late 1975. The Church Commission had submitted its well-known report on plots to assassinate the leaders of Cuba and other countries on 20 November of that year. The Central Intelligence Agency could not continue to assume direct responsibility for assassination plots and terrorist acts against Cuba. The solution was simple: the most trustworthy and best-trained terrorist personnel would form groups which would act independently and on their own authority. This led to the sudden birth of a bizarre coordinating organization called CORU, which was made up of the principal terrorist groups. As a rule, those groups were sharply divided by leadership ambitions and self-interest. A violent wave of terrorist actions was unleashed. In mentioning just a few of them, taken from the many major acts of terrorism which were committed during this new period, I would point out that the following occurred within the space of only four months:

Pirate speedboats from Florida attacked two fishing boats on 6 April 1976, causing the death of one fisherman and severe damage to the boats;

A bomb planted in the Embassy of Cuba in Portugal killed two members of the diplomatic staff, inflicted serious injuries on a number of other staff and totally destroyed the premises on 22 April;

An assault with explosives was perpetrated against the Cuban Mission to the United Nations on 5 June, causing serious material damage;

A bomb exploded in the van carrying the luggage for a Cubana Airlines flight at Kingston airport, Jamaica, on 9 July, moments before it was due to be loaded aboard;

A bomb exploded in the offices of British West Indies Air in Barbados, which represented the interests of Cubana Airlines in that country, on 10 July;

A fisheries expert was murdered during the attempted kidnapping of the Cuban consul in the Mexican city of Mérida on 24 July;

Two members of the Cuban Embassy staff in Argentina were kidnapped on 9 August and were never heard from again;

A bomb exploded in the offices of Cubana Airlines in Panama on 18 August, causing considerable damage.

This shows clearly that a real war was in progress. The airlines were the target of a number of attacks.

The New York Times and *US News and World Report* called it a new wave of terrorism against Cuba.

The groups making up CORU, which began operations in early 1976 although it was not officially constituted until June of that year, issued public statements in the United States claiming responsibility for each of the acts they perpetrated. They sent war dispatches, as they called them, from Costa Rica to the Miami press. In August, one of their organs published an article under this very title, "War dispatch", describing the destruction of a Cuban embassy. That same day, it did not hesitate to publish a particularly significant communiqué signed by the five terrorist groups that made up CORU: "We shall very soon attack aircraft in mid-flight".

To carry out their strikes, the CORU terrorists utilized without difficulty as their principal bases of operation the territories of the United States, Puerto Rico, Somoza's Nicaragua and Pinochet's Chile.

Only eight weeks later, the aircraft with 73 persons on board would be blown up off the coast of Barbados.

Hernán Ricardo and Freddy Lugo, the two Venezuelan mercenaries who planted the bomb on the Trinidad and Tobago-Barbados leg of the flight, left the plane in Barbados, returned to Trinidad, were arrested and immediately admitted their involvement.

The Barbados Police Commissioner stated before an investigative committee that Ricardo and Lugo had admitted that they worked for the CIA. He added that Ricardo had pulled out a CIA card and a second card setting out the rules for the use of C-4 plastic explosives.

On 24 October 1976, *The New York Times* reported that the terrorists who had launched a wave of attacks in seven countries during the past two years were the products and instruments of the CIA.

The Washington Post noted that contacts confirmed with the United States Embassy in Venezuela cast doubt on the statement issued on 15 October by the United States Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, to the effect that nobody connected with the United States Government had had anything to do with sabotage of the Cuban aircraft.

A correspondent of the Mexican newspaper *Excelsior* then commented from Port of Spain that, thanks to the admission by Hernán Ricardo Lozano, the Venezuelan detained in Trinidad, for responsibility for the attack on a Cubana Airlines aircraft which had crashed off the coast of Barbados with 73 persons on board, a major anti-Castro terrorist network somehow connected with the CIA was about to be exposed.

Le Monde stated that the CIA connection with groups of Cuban-born terrorists who moved freely on United States soil was public knowledge.

Many of the most highly respected organs of the international press expressed a similar opinion.

Luis Posada Carriles and Orlando Bosch, who masterminded the terrorist crime and had been associated with the CIA since 1960, were arrested and underwent a tortuous trial, plagued with irregularities, amidst enormous pressure. The Venezuelan judge, Delia Estaba Moreno, instituted legal proceedings against them for murder, the manufacture and use of firearms, and forgery and possession of false documents. Her upright attitude elicited a violent reaction from the extreme right-wing political mafia.

General Elio García Barrios, the presiding judge of the Military Court, maintained a firm and decisive stance, thanks to which the two terrorists were required to serve a prison term of several years. The Miami terrorist mafia took their revenge by riddling one of his sons with bullets in 1983.

Posada was rescued by the Cuban-American National Foundation, which sent US$ 50,000 via Panama to finance his escape. The day of the escape was 18 August 1985. In a matter of hours, he turned up in El Salvador. No sooner had he arrived than he was visited by the leaders of the Foundation. It was the time of the dirty war in Nicaragua. He was immediately entrusted with important tasks by the White House, which asked him to supply weapons and explosives by air to the counter-revolutionaries in Nicaragua.

The meaning and magnitude of the tragedy go far beyond the cold figure of 73 innocent persons murdered in Barbados.

Americans would certainly grasp its magnitude more fully if they were to compare the Cuban population of 25 years ago with the United States population on 11 September 2001. The death of 73 persons aboard a Cuban aircraft blown up in mid-air is equivalent, in United States terms, to seven aircraft owned by United States airlines, each with more than 300 passengers aboard, destroyed in mid-flight on the same day, at the same time, by a terrorist conspiracy.

If we go a little further and take into account the 3,478 Cubans who have died in over four decades as a result of acts of aggression, including the Bay of Pigs invasion and all the terrorist acts against Cuba which originated in the United States, it is as though 88,434 people had died in the latter country, a figure almost equal to the number of Americans who died in the Korean and Viet Nam wars combined.

These words of denunciation are not inspired by hatred or rancour. I understand that United States officials do not want to even hear mention of these embarrassing matters. They say that we should look ahead.

It would, however, be senseless not to look back to see where the mistakes were made which must not be repeated and what are the causes of major human tragedies, wars and other disasters that might have been avoided. Innocent people should not have to die anywhere in the world.

We have staged this massive protest against terrorism as a homage and a tribute to the memory of our brothers and sisters who died off the coast of Barbados 25 years ago, but also as an expression of solidarity with the thousands of innocent

people who died in New York and Washington and a condemnation of the brutal crime committed against them. We seek ways of eradicating terrorism once and for all, of ensuring peace and avoiding a bloody and interminable war.

I am utterly convinced that the ties between the anti-Cuba terrorist groups set up in the United States during the first 15 years of the Revolution and the authorities of that country have never been severed.

On a day such as this, we are entitled to ask ourselves what action will be taken against Posada Carriles and Orlando Bosch, who were responsible for the horrendous terrorist act in Barbados, and against those who planned and financed the planting of bombs in hotels in the capital city and the attempts on the lives of Cuban leaders, which have not let up for even a minute in over 40 years.

It is not too much to ask that these professionals of terrorism be brought to justice. From the very territory of the United States, they have not ceased to apply their insidious craft against our people, in order to sow terror and destroy the economy of a harassed and blockaded country, even though not one terrorist device nor even one gram of explosive has ever left our territory to cause an explosion in the United States. Not one American has been killed or injured, not one facility, large or small, in that immense and rich land has suffered the slightest material damage as the result of an action initiated in Cuba.

In the global struggle against terrorism, to which we have committed ourselves alongside the United Nations and the rest of the international community, we have the necessary moral authority and the right to demand an end to the terrorism against Cuba . The economic war to which our people have been subjected for more than 40 years, in what amounts to a genocidal and brutal action, must also cease.

Our brothers and sisters in Barbados who died off the coast of Barbados are no longer simply martyrs. They are symbols in the struggle against terrorism. They rise today like giants in this historic battle which we are waging to eradicate terrorism from the face of the earth and to do away with a repugnant tactic which has injured their country so severely and heaped so much suffering on their loved ones and their nation, a nation that has already written pages without precedent in the annals of its homeland and its times.

Their lives have not been sacrificed in vain. Injustice is starting to tremble before an energetic and virile nation, which wept with indignation and sorrow 25 years ago and today weeps with emotion, hope and pride as it remembers them.

History, in its capriciousness, has wanted it that way.

On behalf of the martyrs of Barbados:

Socialism or Death!

Homeland or Death!

We shall overcome!